

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

U.S. IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE

AND

JOINT TASK FORCE SIX

SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL

IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIS)

FALL 1998

DEL RIO, TEXAS

Reported by:

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U.S. BORDER PATROL

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07:06 1 RON RUFFENNACK: Good evening, and
2 thank you for coming. My name is Ron
3 Ruffennack and I'm going to be moderating this
4 evening's meeting. This is a public scoping
07:06 5 meeting on the draft Programmatic Environmental
6 Impact Statement or PEIS or Joint Task Force
7 Six and Immigration Naturalization Service
8 missions primarily along the southwest border.

9 Before a decision is made to implement any
07:06 10 programs and accompanying strategies, JTF6 and
11 INS must do a complete analysis of them. This
12 type of broad analysis is referred to as a
13 Programmatic EIS rather than more commonly
14 known PEIS which analyzes a specific project
07:06 15 proposed by the government.

16 Part of the process involves receiving
17 public input during the early phases of the
18 PEIS, and this the called scoping. At scoping
19 meetings such as this, we ask the public for
07:07 20 their input on the scope or range of issues
21 that should be considered for analysis.
22 Comments received during scoping are addressed
23 in the development of the PEIS document. This
24 is the tenth and final meeting in a series that
07:07 25 have been held over the last several weeks from

07:07 1 Louisiana all the way to San Diego. We have
2 two goals tonight; to provide information about
3 JTF6 and INS activities and to receive your
4 comments for consideration in the PEIS.

07:07 5 And you can comment at this meeting in one
6 of three ways. You can provide us your
7 handwritten comments or you may provide them
8 orally during the public comment period or you
9 may provide them directly to the court reporter
07:07 10 following the meeting. People wanting to make
11 oral comments were asked to fill out a
12 registration card when they came in.

13 I might also add that all ten meetings
14 have been conducted and are being conducted
07:08 15 using the identical format that you are going
16 to have this evening.

17 We have a number of different
18 presentations this evening to kind of give you
19 an overview of the JTF6 and INS missions. Our
07:08 20 first speaker this evening is Joe Estrada who
21 is the Assistant Chief of the Del Rio Sector.
22 Joe.

23 JOE ESTRADA: Good evening,
24 everybody. My name is Joe Estrada. I'm an
07:08 25 assistant chief here, and I had the pleasure to

07:08 1 start working since October 1 with the
2 construct program for the Del Rio Sector. What
3 I'd like to do tonight is just give you a quick
4 overview of what the Del Rio Sector is composed
07:08 5 of, give you some statistics on the number of
6 aliens that we apprehend annually, give you
7 some statistics on the narcotics seizures that
8 we get involved in.

9 The Del Rio Sector is responsible for a
07:09 10 little over two hundred miles of linear border,
11 border along the river. We cover approximately
12 60,000 square miles throughout the sector. We
13 have a station up in Abilene. We have a
14 station up in San Angelo. We're spread out
07:09 15 over that 60,000 square miles.

16 I'll keep it real brief and just give you
17 some quick numbers. From October of 1997 to
18 September of 1998, our FY '98, the Del Rio
19 Sector caught over 131,000 aliens. For the
07:09 20 same period in '98, October to September of
21 '98, we caught a little over 41,000 pounds of
22 marijuana. The street value of that marijuana
23 came out to well over \$67,000,000 in value. We
24 apprehended -- we seized over 882 pounds of
07:10 25 cocaine during that time period. We have a lot

07:10 1 of smuggling cases ongoing here in Del Rio.
2 And for the same period, we caught 1579
3 cases -- alien smuggling cases. We totalled
4 about 12,000 smuggled aliens throughout the
07:10 5 area. One statistic that we started measuring
6 here a little bit ago was the number of aliens
7 that we could say probably got away from our
8 agents for whatever reason, whether we were --
9 we aren't able to detect them, by the time we
07:10 10 got to the location that the aliens were
11 spotted, we didn't get there fast enough. Any
12 number of reasons. But for the same time
13 period from October '97 to September of '98, we
14 approximate that we lost about 94,000 aliens
07:11 15 through the area. If you combine that number
16 along with the number of aliens that we
17 apprehended, we've got well over 200,000 aliens
18 that are probably coming up through the Del Rio
19 area.

07:11 20 The reason I mention these statistics is
21 because the problem that we're faced with is a
22 huge problem. And considering the fact that
23 these people are coming through all our local
24 ranchers' areas, all our communities, because
07:11 25 of that travel, it truly isn't just a Border

07:11 1 Patrol problem. It is a community problem. It
2 is everybody's problem in this area.

3 And what I'd like to impress on everybody
4 that is here is the fact that we need your
07:11 5 help. We can't do it alone. The Border Patrol
6 relies very heavily on community support. We
7 rely very heavily on that call for when people
8 in the community spot these aliens, spot these
9 narcotics smugglers, and all the other illicit
07:12 10 contraband that is coming up through our area.

11 Again, I was asked to keep it short, so
12 I'm going to do that. But the message that,
13 again, I'd like to leave with you that we do
14 need your help, and we appreciate anything that
07:12 15 you can do for the Border Patrol and for the
16 community. And thank you very much.

17 John Esquivel is our headquarters
18 representative for the Border Patrol, and I'd
19 like to introduce him.

07:12 20 JOHN ESQUIVEL: Good evening, ladies
21 and gentlemen. Thank you for coming tonight.
22 I'm representing the United States Border
23 Patrol Headquarters out of Washington, D.C.
24 I'd like to give you a brief history of the
07:12 25 Border Patrol, an overview of our mission, our

07:12 1 operations, and the successes that we've had
2 because of our operations and our strategy.

3 The Border Patrol was first organized in
4 1904 by then Commission General of Immigration,
07:12 5 and back then we were referred to as Border
6 Guards. In 1924, we were -- the United States
7 Border Patrol was established. And next year,
8 we celebrate 75 years of proud history.

9 Originally we were part of the Department of
07:13 10 Labor, but since 1940, we have become part of
11 the Department of Justice and are part of the
12 Immigration Naturalization Service.

13 We have 21 sectors throughout the United
14 States and one in Puerto Rico that extends from
07:13 15 Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, California.
16 The mission of the United States Border Patrol
17 is to control -- to secure the external
18 boundaries of the United States by preventing
19 illegal entry, detecting, interdicting,
07:13 20 apprehending undocumented entrants, smugglers,
21 narcotics, contraband, and violators of other
22 laws.

23 We are designated the primary law
24 enforcement agency for interdicting drugs
07:13 25 between the ports of entry. Our operations

07:13 1 include traditional line watch, traffic
2 checkpoints, transportation check, air
3 operations, marine patrol, horse and bike
4 patrol, and our K-9 program.

07:14 5 The Border Patrol's strategy is a
6 prevention through deterrents. It's a
7 multi-year approach which calls for gain,
8 maintain, and extend control of the U.S./Mexico
9 border.

07:14 10 We currently have four operations in
11 effect. The first one which started in 1993
12 known as Operation Hold the Line began in El
13 Paso. That was followed by Operation Gate
14 Keeper which included the San Diego Sector, El
07:14 15 Centro Sector, Yuma Sector, and then followed
16 Operation Safeguard in Tucson. And last
17 August, we began Operation Rio Grande which
18 encompasses the Marfa, Laredo, Del Rio, and
19 McAllen Sectors.

07:14 20 The number of aliens apprehended last
21 fiscal year which began October 1st of 1997 and
22 ended September 30th of this year, on the
23 southwest border, we apprehended 1,516,679
24 aliens. The current staffing level here in Del
07:15 25 Rio Sector is just a little over 500. And we

07:15 1 expect those numbers to grow significantly in
2 the next few years. As a matter of fact, today
3 we had a meeting to discuss the new Eagle Pass
4 station. As you know, the Del Rio station will
07:15 5 be opening its doors earlier next year, and
6 Carrizo Springs will be expanding. So there's
7 going to be lots of expansion here in the Del
8 Rio Sector.

9 As I mentioned before, we are the leading
07:15 10 agency responsible for interdicting narcotics.
11 And in fiscal year 1997, the U.S. Border Patrol
12 was responsible for 52 percent of all marijuana
13 seizures by all agencies combined -- federal
14 law enforcement agencies. And I won't bore you
07:15 15 with that. Joe gave you those figures
16 earlier.

17 Nationwide, the Boarder Patrol is
18 responsible for 22,675 pounds of cocaine
19 seizures, 871,417 pounds of marijuana, and I
07:16 20 just want to highlight some significant
21 seizures that we've had. Although I say
22 they're significant, they are no means
23 unusual. In Brownsville, agents seized 2,501
24 pounds of marijuana with a street value of
07:16 25 \$2,800,000. Agents in Laredo seized 2,534

1 pounds of marijuana with a street value of
2 2,027,200. Agents in Rio Grande City seized
3 1,674 pounds of marijuana with a street value
4 of 1,339,000. And in August, agents, again, in
07:16 5 El Paso, seized 1,705 pounds of marijuana and
6 35 pounds of methamphetamine for a street value
7 of 1,364,000 and 1,120,000 respectively.
8 Agents in Laredo seized 500 pounds of cocaine,
9 street value of \$16,006,000. And agents in
07:16 10 Tucson working alongside with Customs seized
11 1,214 pounds of marijuana with a street value
12 of 971,880. And I apologize because I have no
13 significant seizures for Del Rio. We've been
14 on the road all week long and were unable to
07:17 15 obtain that information. But I do know that
16 they are very successful in narcotics in this
17 sector. I want to say that we've been very --
18 our operations have -- we've had tremendous
19 success with our operations, and we owe that in
07:17 20 large part to the Joint Task Force Six and the
21 assistance that they provided us with
22 infrastructure along the southwest border. And
23 we look forward to working with Joint Task
24 Force Six with our continued success.
07:17 25 I'd like to introduce Lieutenant Colonel

07:17 1 Mike Rossi of Joint Task Force Six.

2 MIKE ROSSI: Well good evening,
3 ladies and gentlemen. I'm Lieutenant Colonel
4 Mike Rossi, as John told you, and I'm the Staff
07:17 5 Engineer for Joint Task Force Six. The purpose
6 of my speaking to you tonight is to talk to you
7 about Joint Task Force Six, our organization,
8 our purpose, and most importantly, what we do
9 to help the law enforcement agencies of
07:18 10 federal, state, local, and all to fight the
11 flow of drugs in our communities. Because
12 that's what Joint Task Force is established to
13 do is the portion of the law enforcement
14 agencies and they help law enforcement agencies
07:18 15 fight drugs in our communities.

16 This is the sequence in which I'll brief
17 you tonight. I'll talk to you about national
18 drug control strategy and the goals put forth
19 by the President. I'll explain to you the
07:18 20 Department of Defense's and Joint Task Force
21 Six's involvement in the counter drug fight.
22 I'll present Joint Task Force Six's missions,
23 and then I'll outline for you every type of
24 operation that we conduct to support the law
07:18 25 enforcement agency so there's no question about

07:18 1 the boundaries in which we operate in and the
2 kind of things we do.

3 The slide they're going to bring up here
4 in a second puts some numbers up for you, and
07:19 5 it talks to you about the drug control problem
6 in terms and real numbers and statistics to
7 kind of bring home the impact of drugs. As you
8 can see, there's over a million drug-related
9 arrests a year, 800 to 1,000 drug-related
07:19 10 murders, and a substantial amount of money
11 spent by the federal government to work and to
12 combat drugs in the neighborhoods. About \$83
13 billion per year actually is spent by the
14 government, 67 billion of it going towards
07:19 15 social programs such as education and
16 treatment, and the balance of that going
17 towards law enforcement.

18 Well, the reason we do this is that drugs
19 are bad for us. I mean, that's the
07:20 20 underlying -- it's the President's policy to
21 combat those drugs. And he's laid out a
22 national strategy to reach some goals in the
23 upcoming years. He came up with the national
24 policy and national drug control strategy to
07:20 25 find a national plan, and it sets some serious

07:20 1 goals for us.

2 This slide here talks to the goals the
3 President set out. And the goals highlighted
4 in yellow are the ones that Joint Task Force
07:20 5 Six specifically are empowered to act in
6 support of the law enforcement agencies. We
7 provide support to reduce -- in efforts to
8 reduce drug-related crime and violence. We
9 shield America's land, sea, and air frontiers.
10 We help break foreign and domestic sources of
11 supply. I had talked a little bit about goals.
12 And the goal and strategy is to reduce by 50
13 percent the illegal drug use and availability
14 by the year 2007. So that's a pretty ambitious
07:21 15 goal, but it put a mark on the wall for the law
16 enforcement agencies and Joint Task Force Six
17 to strive for.

18 Well, Joint Task Force Six is -- the words
19 "Joint Tasks Force" come from the fact that it
07:21 20 is a four-agency -- or all four services
21 participate in Joint Task Force Six; Army, Air
22 Force, Navy, and Marines. We were set up in
23 1989 originally to conduct operations all along
24 the four southwest border states of California,
07:21 25 Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Since '89, our

07:21 1 responsibilities have grown to include the
2 entire continental United States. However, 80
3 percent of our work and 80 percent of our
4 missions continues along the four southwest
07:21 5 border states. The mission statement which we
6 continually refine to meet the threat reads as
7 follows: Joint Task Force Six synchronizes and
8 integrates Department of Defense operational,
9 technological, training, and intelligence
07:22 10 support to drug law enforcement agencies'
11 counter drug efforts in the continental United
12 States to reduce the availability of illegal
13 drugs in the continental United States.

14 What this slide is meant to show you is
07:22 15 that Joint Task Force Six was established by
16 congress to help the law enforcement agencies.
17 It wasn't an initiative by the Department of
18 Defense nor the law enforcement agencies. It
19 was initiated by lawmakers of the country.

07:22 20 In summary, what these statutory codes and
21 what these statutes tell you is that the
22 Department of Defense is authorized to conduct
23 training exercises in drug interdiction areas.
24 We're authorized to provide support to the
07:22 25 counter drug effort and to assist with the

07:22 1 detection and monitoring of cross-border
2 smuggling activities.

3 Now, given us -- Now, when congress set
4 out and decided to establish us, they also gave
07:23 5 us certain restrictions in which we could
6 operate. They told us our boundaries, and this
7 slide lays out those boundaries. And I'm going
8 to walk down these because they're important so
9 you understand what limits we have on what we
07:23 10 can do for the law enforcement agencies and for
11 the local communities.

12 The first is that the law enforcement
13 agency, for example, Border Patrol, must
14 request support. The request comes from them.
07:23 15 They say, "We've got a need. Can you help us
16 with this?" And parcel of that is there must
17 be counter drug link, that there's got to be
18 drugs involved or some way to stop to flow of
19 drugs involved. The Posse Comitatus Act, which
07:23 20 was enacted after the Civil War, precludes the
21 Military from acting as law enforcement
22 agencies or as a police force. We cannot
23 violate the sanctity of the United
24 States/Mexico border. We can't cross the
07:23 25 border. We can't go into the border. We've

07:23 1 got to do our operations on this side of the
2 border.

3 The rules of engagement talk to what we're
4 allowed to do as far as carrying weapons, and
07:24 5 the current rules of engagement we operate
6 under are we can only use our weapons in
7 self-defense. Now, that is the overreaching
8 rule in which we are set up. But as of the
9 last year and half, we deploy no weapons to the
07:24 10 border when we do an operation. So no soldiers
11 that go and do a project, whether it's an
12 aviation project -- all kinds of missions we
13 do, brings a weapon with them to the border.
14 And the protection -- Now, the soldier's
07:24 15 obviously very uncomfortable without some means
16 to protect himself. That's just not the way
17 they're brought up. But the protection then
18 when they operate in support of the law
19 enforcement agency is provided by the law
07:24 20 enforcement agency; the Border Patrol, U.S.
21 Customs, the local sheriff. They are on site
22 with the soldiers to provide that protection to
23 them.

24 Well, the other thing is we're prohibited
07:25 25 from collecting and maintaining information on

07:25 1 U.S. citizens. And we undergo routine
2 inspections to verify that restriction. And we
3 may conduct no operation on private land
4 without the express permission of the
07:25 5 landowner. And that's -- If we got land
6 owners, private landowners out there that are
7 concerned about their ranches or people are
8 going to come on their land without permission,
9 then we at the Joint Task Force Six can't
07:25 10 access, can't use, can't operate on your land,
11 put feet on the ground, unless you say, you
12 know, "You can come and support and operate on
13 my land."

14 This is kind of a summary slide of all the
07:25 15 stuff I just talked about. We provide support
16 but we're not police. We do not search people
17 or property. And we do not seize contraband or
18 make arrests. This cycle -- This is a
19 depiction of how a mission, for example, would
07:25 20 get generated at Joint Task Force Six. In the
21 upper, left-hand corner, you can see that it
22 starts with a request from the law enforcement
23 agency. Then that request is evaluated by
24 Operation Alliance, which is an organization of
07:26 25 federal, state, and local law enforcement

07:26 1 agencies, and they make a recommendation to us
2 and give us working priorities. Then Joint
3 Task Force Six conducts its own legal review
4 and makes sure that there's a counter drug
07:26 5 linkage in the request. Then what I have to do
6 is I have to solicitate a volunteer unit to
7 come down and conduct the mission.

8 What we try to do is create a win-win for
9 the landowner, for the Border Patrol, and for
07:26 10 the training unit. And I'll take a second here
11 to explain that to you so you understand what
12 I'm talking about. The win-win I'm talking
13 about, I use a road project I did in Carrizo
14 Springs last year as a particular example. In
07:26 15 that particular case, the law enforcement
16 agency, the drug -- the Border Patrol in that
17 particular case -- needed access and better
18 access on a ranch. It was having a hard time
19 getting to the river and patrolling the area.
07:27 20 And they needed a road. The landowner that
21 owned the property had a hard time getting
22 around his property because he needed access
23 across his property at different elements of
24 it, and it was overgrown and there were no
07:27 25 trails to the river and around the property.

07:27 1 And the unit needed a training -- they had
2 built all the roads they could possibly build
3 out in Fort Hood -- I mean, over the last 70
4 years they've been there, and they needed a
07:27 5 place to build a road so they could sharpen
6 their wartime skills. We're going to deploy
7 these guys to go overseas and build a road
8 someday, and that stuff takes practice.

9 So in my mind and in the unit's mind and
07:27 10 law enforcement agent's mind and the
11 landowner's mind, we created a win-win. The
12 landowner, at no expense, got road improvement
13 to his land. The Border Patrol, at the cost of
14 materials, got roads across their land and
07:27 15 across their property. And the unit, at my
16 expense, got deployed down to Carrizo Springs,
17 got to operate away-from-home station, and
18 conduct and practice the kind of missions they
19 need to do to conduct the things they do and we
07:28 20 expect them to do if they were to go overseas.

21 So we try to create a win-win. So we get
22 the volunteer unit, then we issue orders, we
23 deploy the unit, they conduct the mission. At
24 the end of the mission, we conduct an
07:28 25 after-action review with the law enforcement

07:28 1 agency, with the unit, with Joint Task Force
2 Six, to gather up any lessons learned on how we
3 can do the mission better next time, maybe in a
4 different place, maybe in the same place.

07:28 5 These are the kind of operational missions
6 Joint Task Force does. Every kind of
7 operational mission, we do. You'll see
8 missions in red on this slide, and those are
9 the ones that are suspended right now and that
07:28 10 we don't conduct. The first three are
11 observation missions; grounds observation,
12 aerial observation, and sensor missions. And
13 what these are are overwatching and observing
14 smuggling routes and parcels of land in which
07:28 15 there might be methamphetamine labs or there
16 might be marijuana plots. They're just done by
17 three different means. Ground observation has
18 to do with troops with feet on the ground.
19 They put soldiers on the ground to observe or
07:29 20 to patrol areas to see what's coming across the
21 overwatch areas. Aerial observation is perhaps
22 a helicopter at night, you know, to watch a
23 certain smuggling route or a certain suspected
24 area. And a ground sensor is an electronic
07:29 25 sensor which does the same thing.

07:29 1 As you can see, ground -- boots on the
2 ground and electronic sensors are currently
3 suspended by the Department of Defense. We
4 continue to conduct aerial observation. We
07:29 5 also conduct medevac and transportation
6 missions. The last bullet there is controlled
7 delivery, and I need to tell you as an example
8 what this is to best explain what's going on.
9 And I'll do this example by saying, for
07:29 10 example, the Border Patrol would seize a load
11 of drugs on a vehicle at the checkpoint, maybe
12 right outside of -- in Uvalde -- I don't know
13 where your local checkpoint is here, but
14 outside of town here. And they seize a drug
07:30 15 load. And that drug load, through
16 investigating and through interrogation, they
17 find out from the person driving the truck that
18 it's headed for Chicago. What the Border
19 Patrol would then do is ask Joint Task Force
07:30 20 Six, "Look," you know, "we want to break up
21 this drug ring. We want to find out who's
22 receiving these drugs. Will you help us by
23 using military equipment, maybe an air plane or
24 a truck to transport this material to Chicago
07:30 25 for its appointed place and time so that we can

07:30 1 carry out the delivery and find out who wants
2 to receive it and then bust the whole -- or a
3 large part of the drug ring." So in
4 controlled delivery with a request, we can
07:30 5 support law enforcement agencies in that way.
6 We do not, however, get involved in chain of
7 custody or the arrests. And we talked about
8 that earlier what my restrictions are. To me,
9 these are the best because they're a lasting
07:31 10 contribution to both the Border Patrol and my
11 unit on the other hand.

12 First thing we'll do is we can provide
13 assessment services to include design, surveys,
14 cost estimating, and environmental assessments
07:31 15 master planning of infrastructures. Our
16 primary instruction missions border roads,
17 fences, and lights between U.S. borders of
18 entry along the southwest board. Again, Border
19 Patrol has a long-range plan for these kinds of
07:31 20 things. They can do particular portions of it,
21 use military labor, and I'm able then to train
22 soldiers rather than hiring a contractor to go
23 out and do it. And the last is if they ask, we
24 can also conduct small arms range checkpoints,
07:31 25 vehicle maintenance facilities, and other

07:31 1 structures throughout the United States and
2 southwest border in particular.

3 Mobile training teams are classroom
4 instruction. And that's what this -- we
07:32 5 conduct about 150 of them a year. And what the
6 law enforcement agency will say is I would like
7 training in medevac, medical evacuation,
8 intelligence, firearms training or land --
9 language and planning techniques and we will
07:32 10 deploy a small group of soldiers to a classroom
11 situation to train law enforcement agencies,
12 again, at their request. We will also provide
13 various other kinds of training as requested.

14 This is my final slide, and it talks about
07:32 15 Joint Task Force Six. It tries to bring up the
16 fact that we're a dedicated organization
17 composed of all four services who's committed
18 both to serving the nation and to support in
19 the law enforcement agencies in the counter
07:32 20 drug fight. This concludes my formal briefing,
21 and I'll be followed by Mr. Chris Ingram who
22 will talk to you about processes we follow
23 under the National Environmental Policy Act.

24 CHRIS INGRAM: Thank you, Colonel
07:33 25 Rossi. The National Environmental Policy Act,

07:33 1 or NEPA, as it's commonly called, some of the
2 requirements and the processes in which we will
3 prepare this EIS. NEPA requires that any
4 federal agency, anytime they propose to
07:33 5 undertake an action or commit certain resources
6 to that action, that they prepare a NEPA
7 document. There is generally three levels of
8 consideration under NEPA. First is when
9 there's a very small or minor project, there's
07:33 10 a category for exclusion. Next level is
11 environmental assessment. And the third level
12 is what we're undertaking here is Environmental
13 Impact Statement.

14 NEPA and the President's Counsel on
07:34 15 Environmental Quality requires that when an EIS
16 is undertaken, that scoping be conducted. And,
17 of course, that's why we're here tonight.

18 The process for NEPA is shown here on the
19 slide. As I mentioned, first, the federal
07:34 20 agency identifies a need or a problem that they
21 need to have resolved. And then they'll
22 formulate different alternatives that will
23 satisfy a need or resolve that issue or problem
24 that they have. If, as in this case, there's
07:34 25 an EIS that's going to be prepared, a notice of

07:34 1 intent to prepare that EIS is published in the
2 federal register, which will initiate the
3 public scoping process. We will, through these
4 meetings as well as through our comments,
07:34 5 gather information that the public is concerned
6 about and develop our draft EIS. That draft
7 EIS will then be released for public review and
8 comment for a minimum of 45 days, at which time
9 we'll gather your comments again, develop a
07:35 10 final EIS, release that also for public review
11 and comment for a minimum of 30 days, after
12 which then we'll issue record of decision.

13 I need to stress that in addition to NEPA,
14 there's numerous other federal and state
07:35 15 environmental statutes that have to be complied
16 with including Endangered Species Act, National
17 Historic Preservation Act, Executive Orders
18 such as 12898 which deals with environmental
19 justice, and just numerous other state
07:35 20 statutes, regulations, and permits. INS and
21 JTF6 have been complying with NEPA and these
22 other environmental statutes in various ways.
23 First of all, 1994, they completed the final
24 EIS -- Programmatic EIS for their program for
07:35 25 their actions over a five-year period. Since

07:36 1 that time, they've been preparing site specific
2 or project specific environmental assessments
3 that have been tiered or connected to that '94
4 document. Whenever there's a project that is
07:36 5 identified, then they'll do these project
6 specific EA's. A lot of them require cultural
7 and biological resource surveys be conducted.
8 And many of the projects, particularly the
9 engineering or the major construction projects,
07:36 10 require that during construction, professional
11 biologists or archaeologists are on site to
12 ensure that these sensitive resources are not
13 impacted.

14 As I mentioned, they published the final
07:36 15 EIS in the '94 programmatic EIS, and since that
16 EIS covered a five-year period, that five-year
17 period comes to a close late next year. And so
18 INS and JTF6 have elected to get started early
19 to supplement or update that EIS. The EIS that
20 we'll be preparing will be formatted very
21 similar to the '94 EIS in that the baseline
22 existing conditions will be presented in five
23 separate technical support documents. Most of
24 these are going to focus on the 50-mile
07:37 25 corridor along the U.S./Mexico border and Texas

07:37 1 Gulf Coast. Although the EIS will address INS
2 or JTF6 actions throughout the continental
3 U.S., most of the activities, as Colonel Rossi
4 mentioned, about 80 percent are located along
07:37 5 the border. So that's where we're going to
6 focus our attention.

7 Some of the goals of the Programmatic EIS
8 are shown here. Mainly we hope to identify the
9 types of INS and JTF6 activities that are going
07:37 10 to occur over the next five years and describe
11 all the impacts that are associated with those
12 types of projects.

13 Again, I want to stress that. We're going
14 to talk about the types of projects. Because
07:38 15 right now, we cannot tell you exact locations
16 or the exact project that's going to occur over
17 the next five years. We're going to look at
18 what we had said were going to be the impacts
19 or the projects on the '94 document, compare
07:38 20 what's really happened, so that we can get a
21 more accurate discussion about cumulative
22 impacts. Some of the benefits are, of course,
23 provides full disclosure of this entire
24 program, eliminates some repetitive discussions
07:38 25 through the tiering process which saves the

07:38 1 taxpayers time and monies. It again provides a
2 full and accurate assessment of the cumulative
3 impacts, not only what's projected, but what
4 has occurred in the past. And just as
07:38 5 importantly, it provides the resource agencies
6 with some valuable information that they may
7 not have gathered otherwise.

8 I need to stress, though, that this
9 Programmatic EIS is not going to allow INS,
07:39 10 JTF6, Border Patrol, or any other agency to
11 conduct a program or an action without the
12 proper compliance of NEPA, Endangered Species
13 Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean
14 Air Act, on and on and on. They will still
07:39 15 have to do their NEPA documentation for other
16 projects.

17 This is our schedule that's proposed. As
18 I mentioned, we posted our Notice of Intent
19 August 28th which initiated our public scoping
07:39 20 process. This is our last of the public
21 scoping meetings of ten, although we are
22 accepting comments all the way through December
23 16th. We will have a draft programmatic EIS in
24 February of '99 that will be out for public
07:40 25 review for a minimum of 45 days. We tend to

07:40 1 have these final issues for public review in
2 September with a record decision in November of
3 '99.

4 That concludes my presentation. I'm going
07:40 5 to turn the floor back over to Ron Ruffennack.

6 RON RUFFENNACK: Thanks, Chris. It's
7 normally at this time we would open the floor
8 to public comment limited to five minutes.
9 Again, that's a procedure that we've been using
07:40 10 at all other nine meetings. At this point in
11 time, I don't have anyone who has registered to
12 speak. I will, however, offer the opportunity
13 to anyone here this evening. If there's a
14 comment that they'd like to make, they're more
07:40 15 than welcome to do so. The meeting is being
16 recorded by a court reporter as was obvious, I
17 think, from the very beginning. I failed to
18 mention that. But the -- for the record,
19 comments made during the meeting will become
07:41 20 part of the permanent record.

21 Is there anyone that would like to make a
22 comment? Yes, sir. If you would, sir --

23 HUMBERTO AGUIRRE: Humberto Aguirre.

24 RON RUFFENNACK: If you would, sir,
25 please state your name and continue to speak

1 very clearly and loud for us. Thank you.

2 HUMBERTO AGUIRRE: I'm Humberto
3 Aguirre. You have a lot of information and
4 statistics that would be a benefit to me
07:41 5 personally. I'm involved with the Veterans --
6 primarily Hispanic Veterans Organization. I
7 just finished my ten years, and we have
8 discussed some of the issues that you have
9 mentioned there. But we would like to get more
07:41 10 involved with what you're doing to help you, to
11 assist you. We have a lot of questions.
12 Sometimes these questions don't get answered.
13 And I'm glad that you're here tonight. But it
14 seems like we're not going to get any answers
07:42 15 tonight, specific answers.

16 What I would like to see you do is
17 continue what you're doing here but invite --
18 and I know you did, I saw the newspaper article
19 where you were going to have this as your last
07:42 20 meeting as -- for the whole region. What I
21 think what I'm trying to say is that it's
22 wonderful that you guys are out here explaining
23 what you're doing, but what can we do in return
24 from the standpoint of a local community to
07:42 25 help you accomplish what you're doing?

07:42 1 RON RUFFENNACK: Yes. And there are
2 a number of people here this evening that,
3 following the meeting, would be more than happy
4 to tell you just exactly how you can get
07:42 5 involved.

6 HUMBERTO AGUIRRE: I'd like the see
7 someone about the roads, that win-win situation
8 that the gentleman mentioned in Carrizo
9 Springs. I know that in Laredo, we had
07:43 10 problems out there with soil --

11 MIKE ROSSI: I'll talk to you about
12 those afterwards.

13 HUMBERTO AGUIRRE: We got some
14 answers to that at the national convention. At
07:43 15 the state convention, we wanted to get some
16 answers about the situation in Presidio, and we
17 never got answers to that that were
18 satisfactory to our Veteran organization and
19 things of this sort.

07:43 20 RON RUFFENNACK: Thank you very much,
21 sir. Appreciate that. Anyone else? Once
22 again, the comment period closes December
23 16th. There's an address on the flier that you
24 were provided when you registered. You can
07:43 25 send those written comments to that address,

07:43 1 and they'll be accepted through December 16th.
2 This concludes the formal part of the
3 meeting. Again, as I said, there are folks
4 here from Joint Task Force Six and from the
07:44 5 Border Patrol who would be more than happy to
6 answer specific questions. And, again, on
7 behalf of both those agencies, thank you very
8 much for coming.

9
10 (Meeting adjourned.)

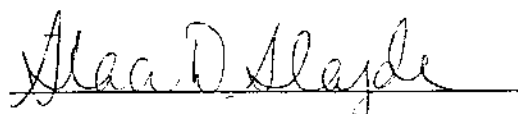
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2 This is to certify that I, STACI D.
3 SLAYDEN, Certified Shorthand Reporter in and
4 for the State of Texas, reported in shorthand
5 the proceedings conducted, and the above and
6 foregoing 34 pages contain a full, true, and
7 correct transcript of said proceedings.

8 WITNESS MY HAND, this the 18TH day of
9 November, A.D., 1998.

10 Cert. No. 7290

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12 STACI D. SLAYDEN

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